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In This Issue

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In This Issue

Three of the five articles in this issue focus on popular support for democratization, a fourth explores popular support for economic internationalism, and a fifth examines factors other than popular opinion associated with the support of democratization. Within this framework of overlapping commonality, however, the scope and variety is great. Geographically the cases range from China to Russia and other CIS nations to Bangladesh to Ireland to a broadly comparative study. The authors are equally (but somewhat differently) dispersed: China, the UK, Finland, Bangladesh and Ireland. Thus indigeneity receives its due and so does the right of foreign scholars to explore beyond their own horizons, a combination we must always seek – and not only in a single journal – in order to develop an international political science worthy of the name. As to gender, one article is by a female author, another is entirely about the right of women to seek full political representation in their country. The ratio isn't perfect, but then again it isn't bad.

We begin with “Popular Support for Economic Internationalism in Mainland China: A Six-Cities Public Opinion Survey,” an article from Beijing by Professors Chunlong Lu and Ye Tian, which focuses on growing support for economic internationalism in China. In this article we learn that in six important Chinese cities, a majority of the citizens now have positive attitudes toward economic internationalism, a change linked not only to such socio-demographic attributes as education, age, and contact with overseas friends or relatives, but also to interesting changes in subjective orientations such as “sense of modernity” and “life satisfaction.” The subjective belief the Chinese often hold in their own cultural superiority has not changed much in its content but has changed in its application: a majority of these urban dwellers are now confident enough of their own and their people's ability to steer their way successfully through the shoals of economic globalization to give it their endorsement. Wisely, the authors do not generalize further, but instead invite others to explore how widely such changes may be found throughout China.

“Support for Democracy and Autocracy in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 1992–2002” by Christian Haerpfer is the first article in this issue to focus on popular support for democratization. However, Haerpfer is also interested in variables associated with popular support for *nondemocratic* regimes in this study of opinion in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. This two-edged approach, covering more than a

decade, offers an unusually sophisticated understanding of the role popular opinion has played in taking these nations along their bumpy and still uncertain road to democracy and regime stability.

With Carsten Anckar, in "Size, Islandness, and Democracy: A Global Comparison" we explore factors other than public opinion associated (perhaps) with support for democracy: size and islandness. Examining his cases over three points in time and controlling for socioeconomic development, ethnic or linguistic heterogeneity, British or American colonial heritage, and dominant religion, Anckar discovers that the effects of either size or islandness are in fact negligible in fostering democracy, with one interesting exception: achieving democracy in Islamic settings is distinctly aided by islandness. Why should this be so? Perhaps difficulty of geographic access (including forms other than islandness) make it easier to escape or soften those dictates of Islam that pertain to form of governance. The implication is not that Christianity, a distinctly hierarchic institution, is itself more democratic than Islam but simply that it is more tolerant of (and pragmatic about?) some degree of separation between church and state.

At first glance, "Stretching the IR Theoretical Spectrum on Irish Neutrality: A Critical Social Constructivist Framework" by Karen Devine would seem to be simply another sally in the seemingly endless IR War of the Theories. But of course battles about theories are always, at root, battles about what needs to be explained and what approach works best to so do, and thus never really trivial. And although Devine's own focus is so strongly on the question of Irish neutrality, her deepest concern is how best to explain how and why popular opinion sometimes can, as unadulterated democratic theory insists it should, guide foreign policy. She argues strongly for critical social constructivism, an IR theory with a strong emphasis on "beliefs, identity, and the agency of the public in foreign policy." Applying this approach and using public opinion data to test the influence of such variables as national identity, independence, ethnocentrism, and attitudes to Northern Ireland, she finds a credible answer: public attitudes to Irish neutrality are structured along the dimensions of independence and identity. Is this answer sufficient? Will the same approach work as well in other nations where a democratic impulse from below seems equally necessary and decisive in the adoption and maintenance of a controversial policy? It is up to others to show whether Devine is right or wrong.

The final article, and the third one to include the question of popular support for democratization, is Pranab Kumar Panday's "Representation without Participation: Quotas for Women in Bangladesh," a study exploring the state of women's participation in the political process in Bangladesh. Women's organizations, donors, and nongovernmental organizations have prompted the government of Bangladesh to introduce quotas for women in legislative bodies, but although these quotas have increased the total number of women in political arenas, the representation of women and women's interests by the women elected to the quota posts has not yet been ensured. In point of fact, popular opinion is still heavily guided by social, cultural, and religious traditions that disapprove of women's taking on such roles at all, much less doing so effectively. Their male counterparts in government are, Panday demonstrates, all too ready to rely on that opinion: Once women in quota-assigned posts ask for their rights, "they are very often victimized, assaulted, and harassed." Progress is being made, but the pace is very slow.

Every article in this issue is convincingly documented and every author has meticulously carried out a method his or her reviewer peers have found sound and satisfactory. Every article has an important point to make, one with significant implications for policy. It happens at times in our discipline that important points get somewhat lost in the quest for satisfactory method. I don't think that has happened here but we conclude with a reminder: political scientists should do their work carefully, but they should also be bold and clear about what their work has to say to the makers of policy. Political science very often leads to new understandings that should be *used*. Who will believe this is true if we do not say so? Prescriptive conclusions are always welcome.

Kay Lawson